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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 13660 121302Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 SY-05
INSE-00 EUR-12 /046 W
----------082066 121306Z /45
O R 121230Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL AMSTERDAM
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
SECSTATE WASHDC 4440

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13660

FOR DIDIR/INS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES ABOARD SHIP OF INDIAN REGISTRY,
DAMODAR DR. ALBERT BLOCK

REF: BANGKOK 13173 (NOTAL)

1. THE UNHCR COMPLETED MAY 9 TAKING BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON
ALL REFUGEES CURRENTLY ABOARD DAMODAR DR. ALBERT BLOCK (REF-
TEL). THE UNHCR MAY 10 DISTRIBUTED BIOGRAPHIC DATA
FORMS IN BANGKOK TO EMBASSISES OF COUNTRIES THAT HAVE
SIGNIFICANT RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS. UNHCR RECORDS
INDICATE A TOTAL OF 91 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ARE ABOARD
THE SHIP VICE 90 REPORTED IN REFTEL.

2. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND AMERICAN
EMBASSIES INTERVIEWED REFUGEES ON THE SHIP MAY 10.
THE FRENCH, AFTER CONSIDERABLE UNHCR ARM TWISTING,
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FOLLOWED SUIT MAY 12, AND AGREED TO ACCEPT 17. THE
UNHCR HAS ARRANGED FOR HONG KONG TO TAKE IN TWO
REFUGEES WHO HAVE RELATIVES THERE.

3. THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY COOPERA-
TIVE AND RECEPTIVE TO OVERTURES BY BOTH THE UNHCR AND
OUR STAFF. FOLLOWING THE JOINT U.S./AUSTRALIAN VISIT

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TO THE SHIP, THE AUSTRALIANS INFORMED US THAT THEY WILL MAKE
A MAJOR EFFORT TO ACCEPT AS MANY REFUGEES AS POSSIBLE.
THEY PLAN TO MAKE A SECOND VISIT TO THE SHIP ON MAY 14
TO FINALIZE ACCEPTANCES, AND ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE MADE NO
FORMAL COMMITMENT TO TAKE A SPECIFIC NUMBER, THEY HAVE
INDICATED TO US AND THE UNHCR INFORMALLY THAT THEY WILL
TRY TO TAKE MOST OF THE REFUGEES. OUT OWN ESTIMATE IS
THAT THE AUSTRALIANS MAY ACCEPT 50-60 OF THEM.

4. THE CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP INFORMED US THAT AFTER TAKING
ON A LOAD OF TAPIOCA, HE PLANS TO DEPART THAILAND MAY 18.
HE ALSO STATED THAT HE WOULD TRANSPORT ALL REFUGEES WHO
HAVE NOT DISEMBARKED IN THAILAND BY MAY 18 TO A POSITION
OFF THE COAST OF MALAYSIA WHERE HE WOULD RELEASE THEM IN
THEIR TEN-METER BOAT. THEY WOULD THEN BE ON THEIR OWN
TO ATTEMPT A LANDING IN MALAYSIA.

5. WE ARE CONTINUING TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE UNHCR
ANDOTHER EMBASSIES TO AVOID THIS EVENTUALITY, AND ARE
ENCOURAGED BY THE COORDINATED INTERNATIONAL EFFORT THAT
HAS THUS FAR CHARACTERIZED THIS EXERCISE.

6. ONLY ONE REFUGEE FALLS UNDER U.S. CATEGORY I. WE
BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT A REASON-
ABLY HARMONIOUS INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION SEEMS TO BE
EMERGING, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THAT INDIVIDUAL,
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AS WELL AS ALL OTHER REFUGEES ABOARD THAT THIRD COUNTRIES
DO NOT TAKE. AT THIS JUNCTURE, WE ANTICIPATE A NEED FOR
APPROXIMATELY 15-20 CE NUMBERS. WE WILL MAKE A FORMAL
REQUEST FOR A SPECIFIC NUMBER AS WE NEAR THE MAY 18
DEADLINE. WE WILL MEANWHILE CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR THIRD
COUNTRY ACCEPTANCES, AND GIVE NO INDICATION THAT WE MAY TAKE
ANY REFUGEES OTHER THAN THE CATEGORY I INDIVIDUAL MEN-
TIONED ABOVE.
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Control Number: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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